



Security dogs have a nose for trouble

Story & photos by Maria Higgins

Pond Security officers Thomas Sanwald and Martin Simon each have what you might call high-maintenance partners – prone to fighting, moody at times, and always in need of attention even on the guards' days off. But when there's a potentially explosive situation, they're the ones you want on the job.

Enzo, Sanwald's partner, and Clyde, who works with Simon, are members of Pond Security's elite canine unit.

Based at the Panzer Kaserne Military Police kennel, the dogs are being trained in an innovative program by both MPs and Pond staff to perform to the same U.S. Army, Europe, bomb-detection standard as the legendary MP dogs. The initiative is part of a multipronged effort to ensure ongoing security for community members during times of deploying resources, said Guy Lane, Pond Security area manager.

The dogs, two of a larger number participating in the program, were purchased by Pond from Detector Dogs of America, a group that selects promising candidates and puts them through something akin to doggie basic training. The Army-Pond training they are undergoing now is honing their natural odor-detecting talents to sniff out explosives with at least a 95-percent rate of success.

When the dogs pass certification, as Enzo and Clyde have, they are ready to work with their Pond handlers as force protection

augmentees alongside MPs, Polizei and borrowed military manpower on U.S. installations in the 6th Area Support Group.

6th ASG Kennel Master Jeremy Peek said that combining the efforts of the MP specialists and the Pond handlers has been very successful to date. The Pond personnel "work really well with us," he said.

It is demanding work, even if – for the dogs, at least – the training is fun and games.

Sanwald and Simon, security guards who were chosen by the Pond company to attend ammunition detection school and become special canine handlers, must constantly hone their relationships with the dogs to keep them loyal and motivated.

This means visits to the kennel even on weekends and holidays to feed, exercise and romp with the animals. As Sanwald explained, "The good part of the job is getting to be with the dogs. The bad part of the job is having to be with the dogs!"

Both men professed a strong affection for their partners, quirks and all. Simon, who noted that Clyde can be a "sneaky cheater" obsessed with wheedling extra rewards and generally must be kept on a tighter leash than most of the other dogs, likened the partnership to "adopting a kid," with equal amounts of caretaking and affection.

"He's a part of me, a friend of mine," agreed Sanwald, who said he particularly enjoys seeing Enzo's joyous reaction when he greets the dog in his kennel each day.

Like all handlers, they were matched with

Pond Security officer Thomas Sanwald bonds with Enzo, his canine partner. To the German Shepherd, jumping to catch a ball (above) and sniffing out hidden explosives (top left) are equally enjoyable "games."

their dogs based on personality – theirs, and the animals'. Simon, for one, is "even-tempered and calm," said Lane, traits that nicely balance Clyde's "rambunctious" spirit.

And Sanwald's supreme self-confidence is essential for dealing effectively with Enzo's "hard-headed" tendency to want to be the boss, Lane added.

Unlike MP patrol dogs, who are all trained to attack as well as to detect, Pond dogs focus on detection – though by nature they are few people's idea of a family pet.

"We don't let them come within 6 feet of each other," explained Army Sgt. Jason DeFelice, one of the expert trainers. "Most of these dogs were the 'Alpha' dogs of their litters, and the young males in particular are always looking to figure out who's the best."

In a somewhat ironic twist, the dogs are trained in what Peek termed "passive response." Peek explained, "They are taught to immediately sit down when they smell an explosive. If they jumped and were aggressive or excited, they might blow up the bomb."

The successful detection of a "plant," or hidden contraband, is so subtle, in fact, that it can take several demonstrations until an observer catches on to the trick.

Enzo shows off his impressive nose for trouble by finding a bundle of explosives tucked inside a car engine with all the urgency of a mutt about to nap.

He uncovers the bomb again and again, receiving a coveted treat after each potentially lifesaving catch. Good dog, indeed.

USAREUR offers reward for missing wrecker

U.S. Army, Europe, Release

Army law enforcement officials are offering a reward of \$10,000 for any information leading to the recovery of a military wrecker believed stolen from a motor pool in Würzburg.

The vehicle, an M936WW 5-ton wrecker (with winch mounted on the vehicle's front bumper), was reported missing March 10.

Officials say a preliminary investigation has determined that the vehicle was likely removed from the secure, but unattended, 1st Military Police Company motor pool between 6 and 6:30 a.m.

The vehicle, valued at \$126,000, was marked with the bumper number P890, but

To report information about the missing wrecker call 377-4906/civ. 06221-39-4906 or contact a CID office.

this number may have been removed or changed.

Anyone who has information about this vehicle should call 377-4906/civ. 06221-39-4906 or contact the local Criminal Investigation Division office.

